





A
S E R M O N
 PREACHED BEFORE
His MAJESTY
 A T
W H I T E - H A L L
 29 D E C E M B. 1678.

By *EDWARD YOUNG*, B. L. L. Fellow of
New-Colledge in *Oxon*: And Chaplain to His Excel-
 lency *THOMAS* Earl of *OSSORY*, GENE-
 RAL of His MAJESTIES Subjects in the Service
 of the *UNITED NEATHERLANDS*.

By His Majesties Special Command.

L O N D O N,

Printed by *Tho. James*, for *William Birch*, at the Sign
 of the *Black-Swan* over against *S. Clements-Church*
 in the *Strand*: M. DC. LXXIX.

THE
SERMON

HIS MAJESTY

AT
THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

S
E
T
glor
glan
dea

A SERMON

Preached Before
His Majesty, &c.

St. JOHN. XV. 22.

If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sinne; but now they have no cloak for their sinne.

THE WORD was made Flesh (says the same Evangelist) and came and dwelt among us, and we saw his glory, as the glory of the only begotten Son of God; full of grace and truth. His Conversation was endearing, his Works all Mercy, his Doctrine

convincing, and his *Overtures of Reward* more great and encouraging than Mankind had ever heard of before: Never was such a gracious *Person* sent upon such an acceptable *Message*, and yet he met with very unequal *Entertainment*. The unprejudic'd and considering Party of those that heard him, repented, and they that repented received him; and to as many as received him, he gave power to become the sons of God: But others were otherwise dispos'd; they felt no burthen of sin, and therefore no cause of Repentance; they thought their affections happily engaged in this World, and therefore cared not for removing them to another: Opinion and Business and Enjoyments had taken up their Hearts, and fill'd them as full as the Inn of *Bethlehem* was at his *Nativity*; and these could not receive him. For God in all his *Methods* of Salvation never puts any force upon us; he always treats Man as he made him, that is, as a rational and free agent; he proposes aptly, and invites tenderly; but then he leaves us to the discretion of Compliance; he moves and assists us to the best, but still he leaves us with power to do as we please; because

because 'tis that alone that commends our choice, when we do as we ought. They say of the *Manna* in the *Wilderness*, that it had no actual taste of its own, but received its taste from the fancy of the Eater; so that an Israelite did make his Meal either nauseous or pleasant, according to his own either thankful or peevish disposition. And if so, that *Manna* bare a general resemblanceto all the Dispensations of Providence which are generally determin'd to good or evil (as to us) meerly by our own usage and reception; and have all their influences governed by our deportment. 'Tis our different Temper that makes the same Heat both melt and harden; 'tis our different Disposition that makes the same act of God both Mercy and Judgment: And as of all the Mercies that God has vouchsafed to Man, there is none of a Kinder Design than that which we now commemorate, *The Nativity of our Saviour*; so there is none capable of being abused into more fatal effects. 'Tis upon this account, that the same *Jesus Christ* is called in Scripture, *The Rock of Ages*; which is a term of equivocal importance: he is a *Rock*, and they that will, may save them-

themselves upon him ; but they that will not, must necessarily split against him: To by reason of him (says the Apostle) that *there is now no condemnation* ; but 'tis by reason of him too (says my Text) that there is now no Excuse. *If I had not, &c.*

To take the most proper Sense of the Words, I suppose in the first place, that by *Them* (*if I had not come and spoken to Them*) is meant, not simply the Jews, to whom our Saviour himself had spoken ; but likewise all others, to whom the same Gospel should at any time be preached : for 'tis evident, that our Saviour means the same here that he does in the fore-going Verses by the *World* ; which signifies extensively all such as are disobedient to the Gospel. In the second place, I suppose that the Expression, *They had not had sin*, is to be taken only comparatively ; that is, They had not had sin in such a measure : For we know that both Jews and Heathens had a Law, by which in proportion they are to be convicted. Thirdly, We must observe, that the Word *excuse* in the Text, which is rendered *Cloak*, signifies any sort of Apology or Colour ; either such as may really excuse,

or

or else such as can only be pretended to excuse; and then the plain sense of the Words will appear to be this, That *Before the Revelation of the Gospel there was such Apology for Sin in the World, as did much lessen and excuse the Guilt of the Sinner; but that since this Revelation the Guilt of Sin is aggravated, and there remains no Excuse, nor so much Pretence for it.*

To illustrate the truth of this Proposition, I shall proceed in this Method: 1. I shall produce the *Excuses*: And 2dly the *Pretences*, that can ordinarily be pleaded for the Commission of Sin; and shew respectively, that all these are voided by the Revelation of the Gospel.

There are Two Things which seem reasonably to *Excuse* in Humane Actions: The First is, *Want of Light*; whereby to know that which we are to do. The Second is, *Want of Motives*, to set us about the doing of that which we know: For it is not enough for me to know that this or that is fit to be done, I must likewise know of what importance it will be to Me if I do it, or if I let it alone.

How far the First of these *Excuses* (that is,

B

Want

Want of Light) obtained in the World before the Revelation of the Gospel, is a Subject too wide to engage in. We know, in short, that there have been Ages of as much Ignorance, as Sensuality still wishes for to cover her Shame. We know the gross of the Gentiles *sate in darkness*; the Cloud was thick about them, that they could not tell which way to move out of it. Yet as *Darkness* it self is sometime called upon in Scripture to *Praise the Lord*, so even Intellectual Darkness, that is, Ignorance, has occasionally great reason to joyn in the Praise: For, supposing Men to be sinful, 'tis happy for them if they are ignorant; the Supreme Judge of the World having laid down this for one Rule by which he will proceed: (viz.) *The Servant that knew not his Masters will, and committed things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes*; Luk. 12. 48.

But we will go farther; we will allow (as we must) that many of the Heathen had a greater share of Light; for many of them arrived to a great height in the Speculation of Virtue, and formed Excellent Precepts of Living; and yet, when all was done, as if their

their Systems had been rather for Ostentation than for Use, they did not generally oblige themselves to the Practice of their own Advices: They Knew well, but acted otherwise: And yet even These had an *Excuse*, that is, *They wanted proper Motives* to set them on work.

Now a Man may be said to *want proper Motives* to set him about the doing of that which he knows fit to be done, when he has no certain expectation of reaping such benefit by it as will recompence the difficulty and uneasiness of the doing. For though God, who is compleat in Happiness, and can receive no addition, has no other Motive of his Actions but Rectitude and Justice; yet Man, who lies here under a great sense of want, and moves only after Happiness, can have no proper Motive of his Actions but Benefit and Advantage: And therefore the Civilians distinguishing a Law into parts, the Preceptive Part, which enjoins the Duty, and the Distributive Part, which assigns the Punishment or the Reward, are pleas'd to call this later the *Sanction*, that is, the Binding Part of the Law: Not but that Equity and Authority, which

B 2

appear

appear in the Precept, do more primarily bind; but because, considering Humane Reluctancy, they do not bind to Effect. They move our *Understandings*, but want force to govern our *Affections*; and therefore *Punishments* and *Rewards* are the only *Effectual Arguments* of our *Obedience*. Nor does God Almighty ever address his *Commands* unto us but upon the same *Supposition*, and with the same *Compliance* to *Humane Infirmary*: For he never urges his Dominion over us, nor the Equity of his Laws, nor yet the Benefits whereby we stand actually obliged to him, as sufficient Motives of our Duty: but he always moves our *Affections* with something Future, some Expectation of importance, proportionable to the measure of that which he commands. To serve God purely for his own sake and without any By-respects, is an Heroick Notion, and may be proper for the State of Heaven; where his Service is accompanied with his Vision; where Sin has no more temptation, nor Duty any uneasiness; but to serve him so here is a more refined piece of Piety than ever yet he was pleased to exact. God knows that
while.

while
us, H
that
made
Oblig
No
the: H
refer
ets H
Hell,
look
restra
their
of th
thoug
most
Wife
Sene
cern
Argu

while we carry this stubborn Clay about us, Hopes and Fears are the main Springs that move our Soul; and therefore he has made these, as it were the measures of our Obligation.

Now to come to our Instance, we know the Heathens were much in the dark, in reference to a Future State: Indeed the Poets had prettily fancied an *Elysium* and a *Hell*, but the soberest Men amongst them lookt upon these rather as well-contrived restraints for the Vulgar, than Matters of their own belief. **Vera puta*, &c. says one of them, *It is good to think they are true, though they be not.* And we see that the most Venerable amongst them for Moral Wisdom (for example) **Socrates*, *Tully*, and *Seneca*, when they discourse expressly concerning the Immortality of the Soul, want Arguments to convince themselves of the

* *Esse aliquos Manes, &c.*

Nec pueri credunt, nisi qui nondum are lavantur.

Sed tu vera puta. Juvenal. Sat. 2.

* *Plato in Phæd.* where *Socrates* is introduced saying, *I hope there is a place where I and good men shall meet; yet I cannot affirm it.*

Cicero Tusc. Quest. *I wish you could prove to me that our souls are immortal, and that we do not wholly die.*

Senec. Epist. ad Lucil. *If wise men have said true, and there be a place to receive us after death,*

truth:

truth of it, and end all their Disquisitions with a Peradventure and a Wish. Now these Men did live amiss (though by the way, many of them lived so well that we may be ashamed of the comparison) but when they did live amiss, they wanted not an Apology, and such an Apology as God in proportion will admit of: For St. Paul tells the Men of Athens, *Acts* 17. 30. That till such time as God had manifested his Decree of a future Judgment, and given an Assurance of it, by raising Christ Jesus from the dead; till that time God had winked at their Ignorance: Not their Ignorance of what they ought to do; for therein their Notions were excellently good; but their Ignorance of the Resurrection, upon which depends all the Life of Humane Endeavors; But now (says the Apostle) after the Revelation of this, Now he commands all men every where to Repent.

And we shall find that God proceeded by the same measures with the Jews under their Dispensation: For we cannot assign a Reason why God should at any time have given a Law so far short of the Perfection of Mans Nature, and beneath the

Purity

Purity of his own ; as that of *Moses* was : wherein the greatest part of the Religious Service consisted in Ceremonies, that affected not the Mind ; and wherein there were such Indulgencies in Moral Actions as Good Men were not willing to make use of : but only this, that God did proportion his Covenant to his Promises ; and required no more of them than he gave them sufficient Motives to perform. The Promises that God was then pleased to make, were only Temporal (*i. e.*) a happy Land, and such Blessings in it as were requisite to the passing of a Comfortable Life. Now these Temporal Encouragements would not Morally bear a greater stress of Duty. And 'tis in this Sense our Saviour tells the Jews, *Mark 10. 5.* that *Moses* did indulge them in some things *for the hardness of their hearts* ; not that we may interpret that Man ever was, / or ever will be, indulg'd, purely because he is stubborn : but therefore *Moses* indulg'd them *for the hardness of their hearts*, because the strictness of his Revelation wanted proper efficacy to work their hearts to greater softness. But when the Fulness of Time was come, to which

which God designed the Fulness of his Revelation; when Christ had brought Immortality to Light, whose Issues depend upon a future Judgment; and when he had thereby given such a full Imploy to Humane Hopes and Fears, as that nothing ought reasonably to engage them beside; then was the season of extending his Commands to their just proportion; of requiring all our Affections, because he had given sufficient Springs to move them: of demanding all we can do, because he had given us sufficient Reason to do all that we can.

And now we come to see how these two former *Excuses* are voided by the Gospel. The First (*i. e.*) Want of Light, is voided by the Excellency of its Doctrine. And the Second (*i. e.*) Want of Motives, are voided by the Greatness of its Sanction. First, The *Excuse* of Want of Light, is voided by the Doctrine of the Gospel; for the Excellency of that Doctrine consists in this, that it gives us such new *Notices* as make Vertue appear to have a *larger Extent* and a *better Foundation*, than either the *Heathens* or the *Jews* could imagine.

The

The *First Notice* it brings us of this Kind, is the *Knowledge* of our *Selves*, and the *Corruption* of our *Nature*; wherein *men* were never sufficiently instructed before: For by the *Gospel* we learn, that notwithstanding the dear Union and Commerce that is between *Soul* and *Body*, there are no two in the *World* at such enmity one with another; none that drive on such quite different Interests as they: All our *Fleshy Lusts* are an Army that war against the *Soul*; and the speediest way to ruin, is to hearken to the *Whisperers* in our own *Bosome*. And therefore those *Acts* of *Self-denial*, which were sometimes lookt upon as *Natural Imprudencies*, are now the most necessary Parts of *Christian Duty*. I must curb and cross my *Inclinations*, because to comply with my *Inclinations*, is to put my self into the hands of those that will betray me. I must not revenge *Injuries*, because I must be revenged of my *Passion*; which does me more injury than any other can. I must love my *Enemies*, because it is a worse *Enemy* that provokes me to hate them; and yet though I must love my *Enemies*, I must not love my *Self*; for in my *Enemies* I alwayes see something good, they

C

bear

bear the *Image of God*, which *Christ* died to redeem; but in my *Self* (meaning by my *Self* my *Sensual Part*) there is nothing but the *Image of the Evil One*, which *Christ* died to destroy.

Now, I say, from this *Knowledge* of our *Selves*, and the *Corruption* of our *Nature*, it appears that *Humiliation* and *Poverty of Spirit*, and *Voluntary Restraints* and *Inflitions*, such as the *Gospel* calls, *Taking up of the Cross*, are necessary *Parts of Christian Duty*, though they never came into the *Catalogue of Heathen Vertues*.

The *Second Notice* we have from the *Gospel*, is the *Knowledge of the World*; that it is but a *Passage*, and not a *Place of Abode*: for as our *Souls* were made of no part of the *World*, so 'tis in vain to look for their proper *Satisfactions* in it.

Indeed if the *World* were our *Home* and our *All* (as both *Heathens* and *Jews* did generally believe it), there were no reason but that we should take up with the pleasures of the Place. If we could conclude (as *Solomon* sometimes does, *Eccles. 2.* That, *This is our Portion, and that no Man may come back to see what shall be after him*; We might infer

fer with him too, That, *There is nothing better for a Man, than to eat and to drink, and to rejoyce in his labour.* But the Consideration, That *God is our Porcion*; and, That we are but *Strangers and Pilgrims here*; is a forcible Argument to restrain our *Affections*.

Now we know that we are designed for a happier Countrey, we ought not to look upon this as a Place of Enjoyment, but rather of Exercise and Discipline. The love of *this World* must now needs be enmity with God; because to place our *Affections* here, is to vilifie that better *Provision* which he has made for us.

The Working our selves into Fortunes by indirect Arts, is no longer Self-Interest, the rescuing of our selves from damage by unlawful Methods is no longer Self-preservation. Our *Soul* is chiefly our *Self*, and who would engage that for a pitiful share in the World; which our *Saviour* tells us *St. Matt.* *is more worth than the whole?* From this *16. 26.* Knowledge of the World, it likewise appears, That *Heavenly-mindedness*, and *Contempt of the World*, and *Chusing rather to die, than to commit a Moral Evil*, are the necessary Offices of a *Christian*; though

a *few* might have been excused; if he had lookt upon them as Indiscretions.

The Third Notice it brings us, Is the Knowledge of the full and perfect Will of God, contained in the Commands of the Gospel; and the Sum of what they require of us, in short amounts to this: (*viz.*) A Sincere Justice, an Universal Charity; a Checking of our Passions, and Regulating our Enjoyments; an Habitual Reverence of God, and a Constant Application for his Grace; a Striving and Running, and earnestly Contending towards Perfection, to the measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ.

Now these are the Notices we have from the Gospel, and by these our Understandings are sufficiently inform'd: We can no more pretend *Want of Light*; for the Rule is clear, and admits of no Doubtings, as likewise it is exact, and admits of no Prevarications.

We must see in the next place how the Second Excuse (*i. e.*) *Want of Motives*; is voided by the Gospel; and this is done by the greatness of its Sanction; that is, by the greatness of the Punishments and Rewards that are there proposed.

And

And now, In the First Place, If Fear have any power to deter us from Sin, what can we hear more important than this; (*viz.*) That the Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness: And that this Wrath of God will finally express it self in *Burnings, Darkness, Anguish, Confusion*, such a State of Complicated Horror, that our very Fears, which usually exceed in the Representation of all other Evils, cannot reach the extremity of this: And what Man then in his Wits can believe that he ought to fear any thing but This, and Him that can inflict it? Mount *Ebal* had its threats at the Giving of the Law, but they were only Temporal Evils, and the last of those Evils, which is Death. Now these were but a poor Restraint to an Eager Passion. Death, when it is a Mischief (for it is not always one) is a Mischief that the meanest Passion we have will contemn, and as for all the Mischiefs that attend Life, since they can be of no long Duration, but must end with the Subject, there can be no vast difference betwixt them and the Pleasure for which a Man would chuse to bear them. If a *Jew* would prefer the Enjoyment

ment of a Wanton *Midianite* in the *Wilderness*, before his Share in *Canaan*, if he would chuse to indulge himself in the Methods of his present Passion, rather than see his Milk and Honey flow, or his Vine and Fig-tree flourish; yet both his Choice and his Hazard being Temporary (I speak to the Letter of the Revelation) I say, his Choice and his Hazard being both Temporary, they bare proportion to each other. But when the Hazard comes to be *Infinite*, when the *Curses* of *Ebal* appear to be but the beginning of Sorrows, and Death but a passage to an endless Train of Severer Evils, in what proportion then stands the pleasures of Sin? And how wild is the Appetite that will not check at such a Gulf?

In the Second Place, If Hope have any influence to incite us to our Duty, what can we hear more inviting than this: viz. *A Kingdom of Heaven, an Inheritance, a Sonship there*; nay a likeness to the only Begotten Son; for when he appears, says St. John, we shall be like him: A state where there is no Want, no Pain, no Tears; but an exceeding and eternal weight of Glory, of Pleasure, of Joy; and (to leave our Hopes in an

EXTA

EXTA

Exta
Ea
Mar
Vine
place
with
day
no ma
taken
never
we m
idle
ges a
Apoll
hath
be th
not
Mar
herm
And
God
they
for w
a Fig
Exc
in po
Justif

Extasy) such as neither Eye hath seen, nor
 Ear heard, nor can it enter into the Heart of
 Man to conceive. When the Master of the
 Vineyard, Mat. 20. went into the Market-
 place, and reproacht some he met there
 with this Question, *Why stand ye here all the
 day idle?* They made him answer, *Because*
no man hath hired us; and the Answer was
 taken for a reasonable Excuse. Had we
 never heard of these Evangelical Promises,
 we might have had as fair a Pretence to be
 idle; but after this Revelation that our Wa-
 ges are by Gods grace Eternal Life, what
 Apology then for not working? He that
 hath these Hopes, and purifies not himself,
 he that hath these Invitations, and prepares
 not himself; like the Man found at the
 Marriage Feast without a Wedding Garment,
 he must be dumb; he can have no Excuse.
 And yet though Men must be dumb before
 God, 'tis certain that as long as they sin,
 they will have some pretence to themselves,
 for we cannot bear our Nakedness without
 a Fig-leaf: We must have some shadow of
 Excuse when we sin, and that not so much
 in point of Vertue as of Honour, whose
 Jurisdiction in the World is larger. For he
 that

that does an Action of important consequence, as the Commission of Sin is, and can give himself no reason why he does it, he down-right calls himself Fool in the doing; and in this point Men are usually tender. Let us see therefore in the next place the usual *Pretences* for Sin. I shall mention Three.

The First, Is the Pretence of the Lazy, and that is, *The Difficulty of the Command.*

The Second is the Pretence of the Presumptuous, and that is, *The Mercy of the Judge.*

The Third is, The invincible Buckler of all Pretences, that is, *A new Infallible Guide.*

First, *The Difficulty of the Command:* And it was by this very pretence, that above 600000 Israelites forfeited Gods Promise, and were all cut off by immature Deaths in the Wilderness. For when God had promised the Children of *Israel*, that under his Conduct they should drive out the Inhabitants of *Canaan*, and possess themselves of a fruitful and happy Land; and in the mean time had given them such Demonstrations, both of his Good-will and his Power, that they had no reason to doubt of either in any fu-

ture

ture Undertaking; yet such was the Diffidence and Cowardice of those that went to spy the Land, that they returned with an *Evil Report* of it: They reported that the *Soil was barren*, that the *Inhabitants were Giants*, and they *but as Grasshoppers* in comparison; and upon this the Attempt was concluded impracticable; and what should they do but go down again into *Egypt*? And this was the Provocation that made *God swear in his wrath that they should not enter into his Rest*; (as we may see the History 13th and 14th Numb.) In the same unreasonable manner, and with the same fatal consequence, do sensual men raise themselves discouragements from the difficulty of Religion; and notwithstanding that God hath demonstrated by *giving us his Son*, that *with him he will give us all things*; the *Assistances of his grace*, to do what he requires, and the *Communications of his Spirit*, to make the very doing pleasant; yet still we cry with the *Sluggard there is a Lyon in the way*: “Who can resist his Desire before a fair Temptation? Or his Revenge at a secure Opportunity? Who can check his Honour or Ambition in their hurry?”

D

“ Or

" Or part with other Darling Pleasures, dear
 " as his Right Hand or his Eye? Who can
 " take up a Cross while the World does
 " not frown? Or bear up against the Tide
 " of Custom and Company? Or make
 " himself gaz'd at by an unfashionable De-
 " votion? The difficulty of the thing it
 " self, together with humane infirmity,
 " make it altogether impossible; we must
 " despair to do it. Indeed all Habits are
 impossible to the unexperienc'd: It is im-
 possible for a Man to draw a Face, that ne-
 ver drew a Line: It is impossible to be Ma-
 ster of our Passions in an instant, as much
 as it is to be Master of a Craft. But Christi-
 anity is our Profession, and Life is our Ap-
 prentisage, and Practice makes easie, and
 Perseverance makes perfect: And who will
 excuse the Man that at Seven years end shall
 say, *He has made no proficiency in his Craft,*
because he found it difficult at the first Essay?
 Bring me a Man that has Watch'd and
 Pray'd, and taken as much Pains to over-
 come Desires, as another will take in the
 mean time to satisfy his Desires; and such
 a Man will tell us that the difficulty is over.
 But alas! we cannot allow so great a share
 of

of Endeavour to make our selves good, as we willingly contribute to make our selves bad. Vice can command our Care and Attendance, Strength and Estate, Reputation and Life it self: but Vertue is not thought worthy the meanest of these, notwithstanding all her present Comforts and future Expectations. What strange insatiation does Sin bring upon Men! We may observe of the *Jews*, that they repined not to sacrifice the dearest of their Children to *Moloch*, and yet they thought a Lamb of their Flock too much for God Almighty.

The Second Pretence, The Mercy of the Judge.

'Tis evident, That our hearts are most there, where we are most fearful to miscarry: Now how cautious and provident are we in relation to our present Concerns? we will not trust God *here* without our own Carving, notwithstanding all his Promises; and yet so sanguine are our hopes, in relation to our future state, that we will trust God *there* without making any Provision, notwithstanding all his Remonstrances. To fize our Provision for another World, there is no Example seems to run so much in our

heads as that of the Thief upon the Cross, though this be an Example, whose chiefeſt circumstances can never occur again. But we will not advert the Gutter'd Cheeks, and Callous Knees, and Passionate Mournings, and Severe Inflictions of the Primitive Penitents. Repentance was heretofore the Porch of a Christian Life, but *Modern Ages* have made it the Postern; it is the *last thing* Men set themselves about: It was heretofore a solemn irksom task of changing Affections and introducing New Habits; an utter Detestation of Sin, and an open Profession of Shame for it; as well to mortifie themselves as to deter others: but *Modern Ages* have passed a Repentance, that looks rather like a Charm; that can do that with ease, which cost others so much pains; that like the Miracle of *Circes* Wanne inverted, can change a Hog into a Man, by a gentle touch. Indeed, when the Church grew so indulgent, as to give Heaven upon these easie terms, I wonder not that *Purgatory* grew so fast into repute; it being (as the Hypothesis made it) so very modest an Error. For who could believe that Souls could mount directly to Heaven with such Indispositions,

posit
sport
Deve
ever
Th
wher
to dr
they
New
fures
of Sa
of C
that
neve
set u
New
of al
Poets
with
Opin
beca
Que
A
mon
New
Men
and

positions, and be there upon a sudden transported with the pleasure of Hymns and Devotion; which, while here, could scarce ever be easie at their Prayers?

These gross mischiefs sprung up in an Age when Men offended at the Light, resolved to draw the Curtains and keep it out; when they shut up the Scriptures, and then fanci'd New Models of Christianity, New Measures of Gods Justice, and New Schemes of Salvation, not according to the Doctrine of Christ, but their own wishes: and at last, that the Conviction of the Gospel might never recoil upon them again to effect; they set up an Appeal from the Scriptures to a *New Infallible Guid*; that invincible Buckler of all Pretences. For *Infallibility* is like the Poets Chaos, a *vast, dark Womb*, that teems with every thing; and as it can produce all Opinions, so it can as easily maintain them; because whoever will oppose, must beg the Question.

A Cardinal Jesuite going about to demonstrate the benefit and necessity of this New Guid, gives us this Reason for it: *Men (says he) must be governed as they are, and not as one could wish them to be: Nor we* Palavicin, in his Introd. to his Hist. of the Coun. of Trent. *know.*

know that Men are generally born with corrupt inclinations, and therefore the Gospel (strictly taken) being too rigid for corrupt Nature to observe, it was necessary to constitute such a Vicar here upon Earth as might temper Religion and accommodate it to Humane Affections; and abate, remit, dispence, and give grace upon occasion, as Temporal Princes do to their Subjects: so that if at any time Men would not live up to the Rule, the Rule might ply down to them; and so God still be served, and Men kept good Catholicks upon such terms as they would bear. This is the import of what the Cardinal says more at large: And surely in this he spoke more truth than he intended, for although it be profane to say that this was Gods reason to constitute a Vicar (for he had no hand in the Constitution) yet doubtless this was the reason that set Men on work to constitute such a Vicar; that thereby they might better bring Religion to serve their Carnal Ends. For though they were pleased in an unmannerly comparison to call the Scriptures a *Leaden Rule*, yet they found it wanted flexibility enough to comport with their Designs; and therefore the only expedient was to set up another Authority.

Under

Under the Countenance of this New
 Guid began a **Casuistical Divinity* to direct
 Mens Consciences without the Rule of
 Gods Word ; the chief effect of whose
 Doctrine is to destroy the Nature of *Truth*,
 by distinguishing *Words* from *Meaning* ; and
 to confound all *Morality*, by distinguishing
Acts from *Ends* ; by teaching to sanctifie
ill Practices with good *Intentions* ; and to
 make *Religion* a *Cloak* for *Sin* ; though my
 Text says, that the Religion which our Sa-
 viour delivered, had left all *Sin without a*
Cloak. And then to what purpose is it
 that our Saviour came? Or to what end
 that he spake? As one of the *Mediterra-*
man Pirates told *Cesar*, Sir, *If you kill the*
little Pirates, and set up for a great one your
 self, *what is the World the better?* So if Re-
 ligion come armed against all Vices, and
 beat them out ; and yet may bring them
 in at the Back Door, to serve her own turn,
 how is the World amended? To what
 purpose is it, that according to the *Princi-*
ples of Christianity ; we renounce the *World*,
the Flesh, and the *Devil* ; if yet we may
 plough with all these, to bring in a Har-
 vest to the Church ; if this World may be
 hook'd.

** See the 7^e
 suite Writers
 of Practic.
 Divinity.*

hook'd in, *in order* to the next; and it be lawful to debauch Nations, *in order* to profelyte them; that when their Consciences are distracted with Guilt and Fear, they may run into the Arms where they find most Indulgence; and catch at a Plenary Absolution, as a drowning Man will catch at a Floating Twigg. Nay, If Religion may be made a Cloak, the World is the worse for it; and Men would have been less barbarous, had they continued Infidels. For the * *Florentine Politician* makes it one instance of Humane Weakness, that Men cannot be thorow-pac'd in Villany; and the reason is, because the natural fear of Conscience baffles them, and makes them Cowards; and so for not acting their Mischiefs home, they commonly lose both themselves and their Designs: but this Check of Consciencious Fear can have no place in the Case of a Religious Villain, who has the ill of the Action reconciled to his Conscience; in such a Case Men have no restraint, they dare be as Mischievous as *Machiavel* or the Occasion would have them to be.

* *Machiavel Disc.*

This

This bold Treatment of Religion, to
 bring it to serve to *Carnal Ends*, made o-
 thers conclude it a more ingenuous way to
 the *same Ends*, fairly to renounce Religion:
 and so *Italy* became at the same time the
 Mint both of *Faith* and of *Atheism*. And
 indeed the *New Guid* and the *Atheist* seem-
 ed to proceed upon some Parity of Rea-
 sons. For the One would new model the
 Church, and govern it without the *Script-
 ures*; and teach for *Doctrines the Traditions*
 of Men: And the Other would new make
 the World, and govern it without a Pro-
 vidence, and teach instead of Scripture
 the Projects of his own System: The One
 found out Methods to forgive Sin without
 purging the Conscience; and the Other
 found out Methods to commit Sin with-
 out affecting the Conscience: The One
 disposed of Heav'n and Hell for no seem-
 ing Reasons but that he was Arbitrary;
 and the Other as arbitrarily laugh'd at the
 supposition of the places: The One inve-
 sted himself with a Divine Attribute, that
 is, *Infalibility*; and the Other divested him-
 self of the Chief Humane Attribute, that
 is,

E

is,

is, *Immortality*. And now who can tell whether *Nebuchadnezzar's* fancy was more extravagant, when he believ'd himself to be a God, or when he believ'd himself to be a Beast? I shall not meddle with the Decision; but only observe this from the Instance, That, *When God once leaves Men to their own Affections, there is nothing so absurd but they may believe it*; As likewise, *When Men once leave the Scriptures, the Rule of Truth, there is no end of their Erring*.

From what hath been said, we can infer nothing more naturally than our Duty and manifold Obligation to value and revere the Holy Scriptures, as our Guid, and our Blessing, and Gods powerful Ordinance for our Sanctification. 'Tis the Holy Scriptures that entertain our Minds according to their proper worth; for they inform the Understanding with the most sublime and important Truths; they work upon the Conscience by the strongest Convictions; and they enlarge our Bowels by the most affectionate Mouves and Instances: so that no Man can read them, without finding him-

himself in a nearer Disposition both to Wisdom and to Piety: As, on the contrary, those Legends, which have sometime been substituted in their place, for the Entertainment of Devotion, do so debase the Majesty of God by unworthy Condescensions; and so impose upon Mens Understandings by vain, fantastick, unprofitable, irrational Idea's, that no man can read Them without finding himself in a nearer Disposition both to Irreverence and to Folly. 'Tis by the Holy Scriptures that our Saviour comes and speaks to us, as he did heretofore to the Jews: And forasmuch as it is the Effect of his Coming and Speaking, that *We have now no more Cloak for our Sins*; 'tis in our hands to make good Use of this Effect, by considering that *Sin is now no more to be covered, but to be purged.*

All things are naked and open before the Eyes of Him with whom we have to do: Why then should we think of a Disguise? Why should we cheat our selves into Boldness, by putting on a Vizard? To dawb and palliate our faults, is but like keeping

our selves in the dark, that the Sun
dazzle us the more when it breaks in
us. All the Discretion we can shew
to expose our selves to the Light, to
our selves thorowly, and to let others
us too: For, If we are Good, Example
the best lustre of Vertue; and, If we
Bad, Shame is the best step to Amend-
ment.

It is by the Holy Scriptures that our
Saviour comes and speaks to us, as he did
to the Jews: And John the Baptist
is the first of his coming and speak-
ing: We have now no more cloak for our
sins in our hands to make good use
of: this Word by which we are to be
renewed, and to be clothed, but to be
naked.

Why should we think of a Dispute? Why
should we cheat our selves into Bold-
ness, by putting on a Vizard? To dawdle
and dissipate our talents, is but like keeping
our

our
F 2